

OUR UNCLE HO

This article was written by Ha Huy Giap, member of the Central Committee of the Viet Nam Workers' Party, when our beloved President HO CHI MINH was still alive. We hope that its publication will be of some help to our comrades and friends who wish to know more about the revolutionary activities of the late President — Ed.



Hanoi, Sept., 2, 1945: President HO CHI MINH reading the Declaration of Independence of the DRVN

In the early twenties, the bloody hands of the French colonialists tightened their grip, strangling the heart, and the mind, and the body of our nation. The greater their misery, poverty, humiliation and sufferings, the more revolts and uprisings our people staged, and with enhanced dauntlessness new men constantly would replace their fallen comrades. The gunshots fired by the Royalists under Phan Dinh Phung and those at Yen The by Hoang Hoa Thám were followed by a mass movement which drew the peasant masses into demonstrations, displays of force and opposition to poll and land taxes. All these patriotic movements were put to fire and sword. The foreign rulers consolidated their brutal sway and began exploiting the rich natural resources of our country, hoping to keep our people for ever under their yoke.

No! Our people would never be subjugated. Throughout our 4,000 years of history, "since time immemorial, whenever the Fatherland was invaded, their patriotism swelled into a great powerful wave and swept off all dangers and difficulties and drowned all traitors and aggressors."

With his heart wrung by the sad plight of his country and his home and with only his two bare hands and the faith of a 20-year-old boy, a young Vietnamese made up his mind to go abroad in search of a way to save his country and his people. This young man did not approve the line advocated by Phan Chu Trinh who merely asked for reforms from the French, as this was tantamount to begging for mercy from the aggressors. He did not agree with Phan Boi Chau's reliance on the aid of the Japanese Mikados to drive out the French because this was tantamount to "sending away the tiger by the front-door and inviting the panther in through the back-door." He was of the opinion that the path taken by Hoang Hoa Thám was more realistic because the latter embarked on direct confrontation with the

French, although his way still bore the mark of feudalism. He found all the previous methods to save the country and the people were ineffective and he decided to seek the path to truth in his own way.

He chose to "see France and thence to other countries" and "to help his compatriots upon their return."

On a late Autumn day of 1911, working as a cook's help on a merchant ship, the "Admiral Latouche Treville", a young man began his eventful life, a life of uncompromising and relentless revolutionary struggle. He was Nguyen Ai Quoc, our Uncle Ho.

According to serve all his life as "a soldier sent by the people to the battlefield" and "a loyal servant of the people", Uncle Ho at all times of his life had but one desire, "a most earnest desire, that is to work for our country's complete independence, our people's unqualified freedom and for the whole people to get adequate food and clothing and a proper education."

As a cook's help, a snow-sweeper, a photographic retoucher, a news vendor, doing all the odd jobs of the most strenuous kind, Nguyen Ai Quoc went to France, Spain, Portugal, Algeria, Tunisia, the Congo and round Africa, made for London, arrived in Rome, returned to Paris and left for America. The more he travelled, the more he was grieved to see the colonial peoples ill-treated, despised and ruthlessly oppressed and exploited. In even so-called civilized countries, many were the poor, the unemployed, the hoodlums and the prostitutes, and injustices and cruelties and killings were rampant to the point of disgust. He came to realize clearly that French, British and American imperialism were alike, their true pursuit being ruthless exploitation of the workers, peasants and other labouring people in both the metropolitan country and in the colonies, but "to cover up the ugliness of the system of

oppression, exploitation and murder, colonialist capitalism has always decked itself out the ideals: fraternity, equality, etc."

With his deep love for the poor, his great compassion for his oppressed fellow-countrymen and his great concern for their freedom and the independence of his Fatherland, Nguyen Ai Quoc was sensitive to the sufferings of the colonial peoples whose countries were under foreign rule. The love for the poor and the oppressed mankind very early opened his eyes to the fact that imperialism is the source of all cruelties and injustices on this planet, and that to save the country and the people, imperialism must be abolished.

AFTER the end of World War I, Nguyen Ai Quoc returned to France. At the Peace Conference which opened in Versailles on January 18, 1919, for the first time in the very heart of Paris and under the very nose of the colonialist sharks, the energetic voice of Nguyen Ai Quoc was heard, demanding equality and freedom for the Vietnamese with an 8-point list of claims of the Vietnamese people. Naturally, the Versailles Conference, which was merely an imperialists' spoils-divid-

ing meeting, turned a deaf ear to the aspirations of the colonial peoples. However, the voice of Nguyen Ai Quoc drew the attention of the democratic organizations and people of France to the Vietnamese revolutionary movement.

The Russian October Revolution in 1917 came like a thunder clap that rocked the world. The first state under the leadership of the working class was born. Lenin's theses on the national question exerted a deep and far-reaching influence.

The Third International was set up in 1919. Nguyen Ai Quoc joined the French Socialist Party, then attended the Tours Congress in 1920 at which he voted for the Third International and came out for the decision to found the French Communist Party, first of all because the Third International and the C.P. were resolutely for the liberation of the colonial peoples.

Thus, for the first time in the course of the uncompromising struggle against the revisionists of Marxism and the social-democratic reformists, the Vietnamese patriot joined hands with the French workers, the French Communists and found the French C.P., and cemented the solidarity and friendship between the Vietnamese and the French people.

between the Vietnamese and the French revolutionaries. For the first time, the 4,000-year old tradition of humanism and patriotism of the Vietnamese nation of which Nguyen Ai Quoc was the incarnation was closely associated with socialism and proletarian internationalism. As Uncle Ho put it, "at first, it was patriotism and not yet communism which gave me trust in Leninism and in the Third International. Step by step, in the struggle, by combining theoretical study of Marxism-Leninism with practical work, I gradually came to understand that only socialism and communism could free from slavery the oppressed nations and toiling people in the world."

From then, Nguyen Ai Quoc had found and clearly defined the path to save the country and the people. To save the people, first and foremost it was imperative to save the country, and to save the country meant to save the people and oneself. When the country was invaded, the home was shattered. This was an entirely new path which raised the moral principles of our forebears to the revolutionary virtues of the communists and which closely combined patriotism with communism in the following two aspects:



President HO CHI MINH at the Tours Congress of the French Communist Party (1920)



President HO CHI MINH on one of his inspection trips during the resistance war against the French colonialists

— Patriotism and the national liberation movement cannot triumph without Marxism - Leninism which lights their way.

— To overthrow imperialism, Marxism-Leninism must rely not only on the working class of the metropolitan country but also on the proletariat and the toiling people of the colonies and it must make inroad into the nationalist movement and uphold the national banner.

PROCEEDING from these standpoints, Nguyen Ai Quoc initiated for the founding of the League of Colonial Peoples, published *Paria*, wrote the book *Procs de la colonisation française* (French Colonialism on Trial) in which he exposed the inhuman exploitation by French colonialism; he earned the approval of the French workers and people, awakened and raised the political consciousness of the Vietnamese people and the peoples of French colonies, mobilized and organized the popular forces of the colonies and worked for their unity with the proletariat of the metropolitan country so as to achieve united action against the common enemy — imperialism, and liberate the oppressed peoples and the working class.

On the platform of the working class, Nguyen Ai Quoc soon realized the importance of the national question and the role of the peasantry in the colonies and agricultural backward countries. At the 5th Congress of the Communist International in Moscow in 1924, he pointed out that "in all French colonies, poverty and hunger is on the increase, wrath and hatred is seething; among the colonial peasants, conditions are ripe for an uprising. In many colonies they have risen time and again but all their uprisings have been drowned in blood. If the peasants keep silence, the reason is that they still lack organization and leaders. The Communist International must help them organize

themselves, supply them with leading cadres and guide them to the revolution and liberation."

Through his intense activities, Marxism - Leninism and the light of the October Revolution broke through the iron curtain of the French colonialists and, little by little, penetrated the hearts of the Vietnamese people. The working class, the peasantry and other strata of the labouring people in Viet Nam stepped up their struggle. Towards the end of 1924, Nguyen Ai Quoc arrived in Canton (China), re-organized the Tam Tam Na into Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association, founded a communist group, educated and cultivated the revolutionary seedlings among young patriots. From these grew a vigorous revolutionary movement which unceasingly gained in strength while proliferating. Three communist parties came into being in Viet Nam. Nguyen Ai Quoc convened in Hongkong a conference for the merger of the three organizations. On February 3, 1930, our Party was officially founded under the name of Indochinese Communist Party. He achieved the unity of the forces of the working class, closely associating patriotism with the workers' movement and taking the Vietnamese revolution into a new stage, that in which the working class assumed the leadership of the revolution, that of its growth and its transformation into an irresistible movement leading the entire Vietnamese people to rise up against the common enemy — imperialism and feudalism.

These few recollections on the formation of our Party suffice to remind us of the magnitude of the services of Uncle Ho. He was the first to introduce Marxism-Leninism into Viet Nam and apply it in a creative manner to the reality of our country. He was the educator and organizer of the revolutionaries for the revolution movement in Viet Nam, unifier of the Vietnam-

ese communist forces and the founder of our Party. He was the leader of the working class and at the same time of our nation.

OUR Party has grown rapidly like Phu Dong of the legend, out of fire and mud. It has always continued and enhanced the tradition of heroism and dauntlessness of our people in the light of Marxism-Leninism. It has led our people to chase out the aggressors with bamboo spears and build the country from scratch.

Hardly had our Party been founded when Nguyen Ai Quoc was arrested in Hongkong. He fought hard against the intrigues of imperialism and the Kuomintang. He braved all dangers and escaped to the Soviet Union, then Thailand and

returned to China. He conducted his activities around the perimeter of Viet Nam; and established close contact with our Party and the revolutionary movement at home. In 1941, he made his way to Pac Bo (Cao Bang) where, together with the C.C., he took over the leadership of the revolution, keeping whole his unshakable faith in the inevitable triumph of the revolutionary movement, at a moment when the 2nd World War just broke out and the fascist armies were deploying in force and when our people were living with great fortitude days of mourning and suffering under the French and Japanese double yoke.

In May 1945, under the chairmanship of Nguyen Ai Quoc, the 8th Plenum of the C.C. estimated that the contradiction between the Indochinese peoples and the imperialist aggressors was

the main one and decided to speed up the preparation for an armed insurrection and the building of guerrilla bases. He then predicted that fascist Germany would invade the Soviet Union, but that the latter would win and a series of socialist countries would come into existence and the revolution would be successful in many countries. With unusual clearheadedness, he held, as the 8th Plenum stressed, that "If we fail to regain independence and freedom for our people as a whole, not only our entire nation, but our entire people will suffer for ever the fate of the beasts, but the claims of the proletarian class would never be met for ten thousand years..."

The session consequently decided to found the League for the Independence of Viet Nam (Viet Minh League for short) and Nguyen Ai Quoc's appeal was heard all over the country.

In mid-1942, Nguyen Ai Quoc went to China to contact the Chinese revolution and was arrested by the Chiang Kai-shek authorities. He had by then changed his name into Ho Chi Minh. During nearly two years, going through scores of prisons and a thousand privations and trials, he wrote his *Prison Diary* composed of poems filled with the patriotism, radiant with the revolutionary courage and confidence in final victory, of a great communist.

In 1944, he was released. The Viet Minh League's influence made itself felt throughout the country. National Salvation Associations were set up everywhere. The armed forces made their appearance. The Viet Nam Propaganda-Liberation Army came into being.

The right time has come. The Japanese fascists capitulated on August 15, 1945. President Ho Chi Minh's appeal for a general insurrection resounded in the whole country: "The decisive hour in the destiny of the nation has struck. Fellow-citizens throughout the country, let us rise up to free ourselves... with our own strength!"



President HO CHI MINH decorating Dien Bien Phu fighters



President HO CHI MINH tending his chrysanthemum plants given by Southern fellow-countrymen

The August Revolution was successful. On September 2, 1945, at Ba Dinh Square in Hanoi, President Ho Chi Minh, on behalf of the Provisional Government of the DRVN, solemnly read the historic Declaration of Independence to our people and the world. The history of mankind opened a new page: under the leadership of our Party and President Ho Chi Minh, our people established the first people's democratic State in a former colony.

POWER was now in our hands. But innumerable difficulties cropped up. Several hundred thousand Chinese Kuomintang troops entered our country with, in their bandwagons, the Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang and Dong Minh Hoi cliques of traitors who immediately set to try to overthrow the people's power and liquidate the Communist Party. In the South, the French colonialists staged a comeback under cover of the British colonialists and unleashed a war of reconquest. Our army was in the making, our finances were non-existent, the famine caused by the Japanese took nearly two million lives, our young state apparatus was still skeletal and weak. Nevertheless the Vietnamese revolutionary ship heroically and victoriously weathered the hurricanes and storms

under the firm steering of our Party headed by Uncle Ho.

Thanks to the directives and policies conforming to our people's aspirations worked out by the Party and Uncle Ho, and thanks to the breadth and depth of Uncle Ho's humanism, vast as the ocean and capable of touching and guiding everybody, uniting our entire people and developing the combativity of the whole nation, we won the battles against famine, ignorance and foreign aggression.

Our people wanted peace to build the country, but the French colonialists deliberately sought to reconquer our country. The more concessions we made, the greedier they became. On December 19, 1946, the nationwide Resistance war broke out. President Ho Chi Minh exhorted all compatriots throughout the country to rise up: "No! We would rather endure any sacrifice than lose independence and be slaves."

Throughout the nine years of Resistance War, under the leadership of the Party and Uncle Ho, our people united into an unshakably monolithic bloc, produced and fought at the same time, heroically endured all sacrifices to carry out a persistent and long resistance which expectedly ended in victory. For all its machiavellism of old colonialists, French imperialism had to capitulate before our people and was compelled to accept the armistice and to sign the Geneva Agreements recognizing the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of our people and other Indochinese peoples. The election which heralded the victory of the August Revolution and Dien Bien Phu also sounded the death-knell of the French colonialists in our country, awakening and stimulating thousands of millions of people in the world to stand up, strongly confi-

dent in the cause of national liberation under the guiding banner of Marxism-Leninism.

Peace was re-established, Viet Nam was temporarily divided into two zones. The North, completely liberated, engaged in building socialism. The South came under the thumb of the US aggressors and their lackeys who savagely repressed and massacred our kindred there.

Our Party and Uncle Ho led the building of socialism in the North at a steady pace. Since 1954, the North Viet Nam people have been constantly marching forward with the impetus of revolutionary offensive, has successfully carried out land reform and economic rehabilitation, completed socialist transformation, developed economy and culture, and begun building the material and technical foundations of socialism.

In South Viet Nam, the Revolution has been going from success to success, driving US imperialism and its lackeys into a tunnel with no end in sight. Following its heavy setbacks in South Viet Nam, US imperialism trying to extricate itself from the impasse, escalated its war into North Viet Nam, in an attempt to extend the war to the whole of our country and the whole of Indochina. But their calculations made in panic proved wrong. In the whole country, our people dealt them deadly blows and forced them to halt the bombing of the North unconditionally and enter into negotiation with the RVVN Provisional Revolutionary Government in Paris to negotiate an end to the war.

OUR entire people, guided and educated by the Party and Uncle Ho have been bringing into play the noble tradition of heroism of our ancestors and upholding the spirit of



President HO CHI MINH reading in the garden of the Presidential Palace

powerful offensive of revolutionary heroism in all aspects of production and fighting. An unparalleled ebullient emulation movement has been gaining momentum throughout the length and breadth of the country, in the countryside, in the factories, mines, public offices, schools, state farms, construction sites. Every hour and every minute, from this movement have emerged numbers of heroes and emulation fighters and thousands of good examples have been set, vying to perform good deeds with alacrity, to remain loyal to the Fatherland and faithful towards the people, to inculcate themselves with such revolutionary virtues as "industriousness, thriftiness, integrity and righteousness." These are the multicoloured flowers of our national garden.

Forty years ago, Uncle Ho fostered the revolutionary seedlings among the youth and henceforth achieved step by step the unity of more than 30 million Vietnamese, and led them into a massive march under the glorious banner of our Party towards the triumph of the August Revolution and the victory over the French colonialists. It now is certain that the US aggressors will be swept out of our land and that South Viet Nam will be liberated, our country reunified and the building of socialism successfully completed.

For more than 10 years now, Uncle Ho himself detected, encouraged and awarded nearly 5,000 people by whom they had been beating his effigy in recognition of their meritorious deeds. The good examples have been studied and cited and they will inspire millions of people to vie in performing good deeds in the everyday life. This is a fundamental method taught us by Uncle Ho to educate and train the new society with civilized habits and refined manners and customs.

THE image of Uncle Ho is that of a Father, an Uncle and an elder brother, the image of our nation. It is deeply engraved in the heart of every Vietnamese. It depicts the brotherhood of our people with the oppressed peoples, with the world proletariat, the friendship with the world's peoples.

From a young patriot sharing with others their misfortune, Uncle Ho found the true path to save our country and people. He acquainted himself with Marxism-Leninism and allied it thoroughly to the reality of Viet Nam. Devoting to the point of atonement his whole life to his country, his people, and mankind, he became a great communist, leader of a heroic Party, a heroic people and a heroic country.

His strength lay in that of the national traditions of patriotism and love for the people, of heroism and indomitability, closely combined with that of socialism and proletarian internationalism. It was the strength of the four-millenary moral precepts which command human comportment, developed to the upsurge of the revolution in

our epoch, epoch of socialism, and brought to the highest peak in the light of Marxism-Leninism to become an immense and invincible strength.

His strength was that of the national democratic spirit combined with internationalism, the quintessence of ancient and modern knowledge of the East and the West, the incarnation of national unity and international solidarity.

His strength lay in an absolute confidence in the vast capabilities of the labouring people, in an extraordinary power of persuasion capable of guiding, educating and uniting everybody, linking the interests of the proletariat to the national interests from the position of the working class, wedding our traditional notions of humanism and love of man with the humanism of communism.

His strength was the moral strength of a man who devoted his whole life to the revolution, to the cause of liberating and reunifying our Fatherland, to the liberation of the oppressed working class, peasantry and labouring people, to the victory of socialism and communism, to the abolition of exploitation of man on a world-wide scale.

Night and day, he worried about the supreme interests of the nation, the everyday interests of the people. Never did he think of his personal interests. He found his happiness in the devotion to everybody, in his absolute loyalty to the Fatherland, in his exemplary dutifulness towards the people. He anticipated before the people's worry and was the last to enjoy happiness. Every additional day of our people's suffering interfered with his sleep and spoiled the taste of his food. This whole life is an example of simplicity, modesty, naturalness and

optimism. He lived, ate and dressed simply and his manners were affectionate, polite, refined, noble and Vietnamese to the tip of his fingers. A cook's help on a cargo ship, a snow-sweeper at a school, a militant living in a grotto and sleeping in the forest during the Resistance, President of a Republic, he always kept in close touch with his fellow Vietnamese and his fighters, took two frugal meals a day and dressed himself barely warmly enough to stand

the cold. He worked tirelessly: the discussion of military and state affairs over, he would take his bamboo tubes and water his kitchen-garden with the kids.

His life is the source of our pride, and that of progressive mankind as well. Nowadays, our entire people are drawing inspiration from his revolutionary life, a life of an extreme beauty and greatness, reflecting the most glorious era of the nation's history.

Thank you, HO CHI MINH, thank you, great man, After 4,000 years, we Vietnamese become Vietnamese again.

(Poem of TO HUU)

* President Ho Chi Minh's Political Report.

** Excerpts from the article "Equality by Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh), June 1, 1922, retranslated from the Vietnamese.



President Ho Chi Minh and a people's army unit in the first resistance war: Conducted by him, the fighters sing the well-known song "Ket Doan" (Unity)



Visiting an A-A defence unit